

THE HERUB THE COUNT AND THE CHINAMAN



Now COUNTESS CASSINI, When a Child In Short Skirts Conducted the Most Remarkable Treaty Negotiation in the History of Nations.

THE fate of Asia hinges on a document that owes its existence to a little child.

When Russia and Japan flew each at the other's throat it was because of conditions arising from the treaty by which China gave the Czar a basis of operation at Port Arthur and Tientsin.

Every season the charming young social leader of the Diplomatic Corps at Washington arouses the envy of society with a wonderful new ball gown of priceless silk, into the delicate fabric of which is woven the royal dragon of China.

And whenever the Countess de Cassini dons one of these gowns she thinks of the imperial donor and the day she acted as translator for Li Hung Chang and arranged the treaty which gave Russia her seaport in Manchuria.

PORT ARTHUR, the great stronghold of Russian power, which was a menace to the integrity of China until Japan flung her challenge into Russia's face and made the port a prison for the Czar's fleet, is on Chinese soil and under the sovereignty of the middle kingdom.

Technically, Russia is only a tenant under lease, but she meant to make her lease perpetual, regardless of China's rights or wishes.

When the treaty of Port Arthur was made, Russia was very friendly to China. The lion and the lamb foregathered amiably, and a little child led them. It is a fact, recorded upon the imperial books of China by order of the Emperor, that the Port Arthur treaty



Li Hung Chang



Count Cassini

PHOTO BY CLINEPINT WASH. D.C.

was conducted for both powers by a child, Marguerite de Cassini, niece, and now adopted daughter, of the Russian Minister Plenipotentiary to China—now Russian Ambassador and dean of the Diplomatic Corps in the United States—was the treaty maker, and the youngest diplomat known to history.

Count Cassini was stationed at Pekin, where preliminary negotiations of a treaty giving to Russia a naval base on the Pacific were prolonged in the wearisome, dilatory Chinese fashion until the heat of summer made the city unbearable. Before any definite conclusion was reached the Russian Minister moved from the city to a country villa with his staff and his family, and there awaited the leisurely action of Oriental diplomacy.

In the high-walled garden, filled with bloom and verdure, a black-eyed, merry playful child, the little Marguerite played and sang and chattered in Chinese to her native nurse. The child had learned to speak Chinese as fluently as she spoke her native tongue.

Chang, in a large apartment opening upon the walled garden. The situation was acute when through the window came the sound of childish laughter, and glad of any diversion to relieve even for a moment the absurd tension of this diplomatic blockade, both statesmen turned to the window and watched the little Countess pursuing butterflies in the garden.

The Count, perceiving smiling interest upon the face of his visitor, called to the child to come and greet the stranger. Up the white marble steps skipped the tiny maid and dropped a pretty curtsy. Li Hung Chang, always fond of children, patted the child upon the head and spoke to her. And, as if her own language, the tiny Countess returned the compliment in polished Chinese.

Into the eyes of Li Hung came a gleam of sudden inspiration. His face beamed with happiness at the brilliancy of his idea of making a bold experiment. Taking the child by the hand, he led her to her father's side and bade her deliver a certain brief message, translating as she went from Chinese into

and, except a single other member of the legation staff, she was the only one of the Minister's household who could speak both languages.

Pierre Rogestvensky, secretary of legation, also understood Chinese, and was depended upon to act as interpreter for Count Cassini and Li Hung Chang in the treaty negotiations. For weeks the Russians waited in their summer retreat, but no intimation of an intention to bring matters to a speedy conclusion came from the Chinese Court, and one day the secretary left the villa for a trip to Pekin on leave of absence.

Rogestvensky had been gone but a few hours when Li Hung Chang, resplendent in yellow jacket, peacock plume and other insignia of honor, and attended by a gorgeous retinue of Chinese statesmen, arrived at the legation in state and was received with elaborate courtesy by the Russian Minister. Li Hung Chang spoke no Russian, and the Count's assurances of distinguished consideration, conveyed in French, were only partly intelligible to him. Each knew that the other was saying the proper complimentary things, of course, and the mere formalities of reception were gotten through with just as satisfactorily, no doubt, as if they could have understood each other.

But in the absence of Rogestvensky, who could not easily be recalled, that was as far as they could go, and evidently the Chinese statesman had come to talk business about the long-delayed treaty.

The two grave statesmen saluted until they were tired, smiled until their faces ached, and then shook hands to intimate that with the best intentions in the world, they could proceed no further. The situation was not only socially awkward, but politically critical. Count Cassini had received Li Hung



Pierre Rogestvensky who was to have acted as interpreter for treaty of Port Arthur

PHOTO BY FALK WARDORF ASTORIA

Russian. The Count's face, too, was illumined. The three gathered about a table, and he instructed her to listen attentively and translate to him, word for word, exactly what the great Chinaman should say.

Li Hung Chang for a moment sat in deep thought, and then slowly, carefully picking and choosing his words, simplifying all the high sounding legal and technical language down to the elementary words capable of being absolutely comprehended by this child of tender years, he proceeded with the treaty negotiations.

Count Cassini followed this example

in his replies, and from the end of the room the gorgeously appressed statesman looked spellbound at the scene, which probably never before in the world's history, and assuredly never since that Port Arthur treaty was accomplished, has been paralleled.

Down to the smallest detail the treaty was then and there conducted, and with a grave handshake the two statesmen parted.

When the Emperor learned of the affair, immediately upon the return of his Ambassador to Pekin, his astonishment and delight knew no bounds.

What could he do to evince his appreciation of the unique transaction?

Something surely out of the ordinary must be thought of.

The next morning while the dews and mists yet lay heavy upon the valleys, there traveled over the mountain road a caravan of brown-skinned men bending beneath heavy burdens. This cargo, finally deposited at the Russian Legation, proved to be a wealth of carved furniture and cavernous chests heaped high with bolt after bolt of silken stuffs of all descriptions and golden embroideries, in which the royal dragon of the Empire lashed and wound itself about in labyrinthian coils and darts.

And all for the little happy-hearted maid in the white frock, who, unconscious of what she had done, was again chasing butterflies and plucking flowers within the high-walled garden of the legation villa.

Each year since that time the young Countess has had one of her ball gowns fashioned in Paris from a bolt of the Emperor's gift of shimmering white silken stuffs. And each year there has been no end of gowns made from the contents of those fragrant sandalwood chests which the brown-skinned servants of the Emperor bore over the mountains to her in recognition of the fact that she, as the translator, had conducted the treaty of Port Arthur.

PORT ARTHUR TREATY

UNDER the treaty which little Miss Cassini helped to negotiate Russia holds a twenty-five-year lease of Port Arthur and Tientsin and their adjacent waters.

These ports may serve as military and naval bases for Russia, but the official in charge may not be known as governor general, and the troops of the middle kingdom of China cannot encamp on the leased territory.

Russia undertook to construct forts and barracks and adopt "whatever other means are necessary" to defend the points.

Russia's railroad to Tientsin was also specified in the treaty.

China undertook to leave an uninhabited zone north of the leased land, to be controlled by Chinese officials, but not open to Chinese troops.

Russia undertook not to trespass upon or seize any Chinese territory.

THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

JAPAN, smarting under the knowledge that it was Russia, who took away from her the victor's spoils at the close of the Chinese war, began immediately to prepare for battle with the Czar.

One of the purposes of the Japo-Chinese war had been to secure for Japan a foothold in Korea and an outlet for her ever-increasing population. This was necessary to the progress of the island Empire. The intention of Russia in taking Port Arthur by the treaty negotiated through little Countess Cassini was to drive Japan back to the islands and shut out hope of her ever getting a foothold on the mainland.

Japan began feverishly and quietly to get ready for war. For eight years

the preparations went on. It was the dominating idea of every man, woman and child. China feared Russia more than Japan. Count Cassini was in China for the purpose of negotiating the treaty which would in time drive Japan back for good and be the wedge that would ultimately give Manchuria and Korea to Russia.

On the pretext of keeping the peace during the Boxer outbreak Russia flooded Manchuria with troops and then refused to take them away. She even threatened Korea. Then Japan was ready to strike, and, after negotiations that were hopeless from the start, the blow fell at Port Arthur on the night of February 8, 1904. Instantly Japan threw an army corps into

Korea and the Emperor of the Hermit Kingdom made a defensive and offensive treaty with the intruders.

Since then Russia's sea power in the East has been broken, and Russian troops who had invaded Korea have been swept back across the Yalu. Russian troops have slowly fallen back to entice Japan away from the seaboard into the interior, where great land battles would decide the outcome of the war, with better chances for Russia. The first moves in the war game certainly have been in favor of the little men from the land of Nippon.

As yet, no other Power has been dragged in, but all Europe is holding its breath.